Snp 1.4 — Kasibhāradvāja Sutta — The Farmer Bhāradvāja

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.
Source: https://www.mindreleased.com/s/Sutta-Nipta_Bhikkhu_Candana_2026-2ggf.pdf#page=35
Source revision: ff6fa85ebaed058886a2d52b1b0d3e1b29eeca3b26995a23bff6a50066e84495
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Text

Snp. 1.4

Kasibhāradvāja Sutta

“The Farmer Bhāradvāja”

75. I have personally heard this.

Once, The Blessed One was living among the Southern Hills, in the brahmin village Ekanāḷa, within the Magadhan Kingdom. It was during that time, that the brahmin farmer Bhāradvāja had been ploughing the fields with his five hundred yoked oxen.

Then, when it was morning, The Blessed One, after putting on His robes and taking His alms bowl and outer robe with Him, went to the field where Bhāradvāja the brahmin farmer was ploughing the land.

Now, when The Blessed One arrived, Bhāradvāja was seen distributing food to the needy. So, The Blessed One went there and stood, silently.

On seeing The Blessed One stand there for alms, Bhāradvāja remarked, in verse:

“Recluse, I work by ploughing and sowing, only afterwards do I eat! So, if you also want to eat, then do as I do and first

plough and sow, and only after you have ploughed and sowed, you may eat!”

And The Blessed One responded by saying:

“Brahmin, I too plough and sow, and it is only afterwards that I eat!”

“But I do not see Master Gautama with a plough or a plough share or even a driving stick, nor any oxen with him, yet Master Gautama says ‘Brahmin, I too plough and sow, and it is

only afterwards that I eat!'"

Then, the brahmin farmer Bhāradvāja continued addressing The Blessed One in verse:

76. "You claim to be a farmer, but we do not see you ploughing. Tell us, what is the kind of ploughing that you do, so I may come to know of what it is that you farm and plough?"

And The Blessed One replied:

77. "Faith is the seed, while restraint is the rain, whereas wisdom is my yoke and plough; wise moral shame is the pole, and the mind its reins, while mindfulness is my driving stick.

78. "Being guarded thus in body, guarded in speech, I eat only what the body needs and no more. I use truth as my weeding hook, and soft forbearance is my release.

79. "Persevering effort is my yoked ox, which carries me all the way to my goal, non-stop, relentlessly, where having reached it, there is no more grieving.

80. "This is the way I do my ploughing, where the Deathless is the fruit of the harvest; and when you are finished doing this kind of farming, you are released fully from all suffering."

In hearing these words, the brahmin farmer Bhāradvāja reached for a bronze bowl and, by filling it up with deliciously rich milk rice, he presented it to The Blessed One by saying:

"May Master Gautama eat this milk rice; it seems that You are indeed a farmer! For, the ploughing that You do results in one to straightaway taste the Deathless, as its fruit!"

And The Blessed One continued speaking:

81. "It is not appropriate for me to eat food that has been offered by the chanting of verses. After all, this is not the way for those who have the ability to see correctly. The Buddhas reject the practice of incantations, and so long as the Dhamma exists, brahmin, this position remains.

82. "Instead, just concern yourself with making the offering of food and drink, to the Great Sage, who has destroyed the heart's contaminants, the One who is completely calmed from all kinds of guilty remorse. Thus, such a One is the fertile field of merits, for all those seeking their gain."

"In that case, Master Gautama," replied Bhāradvāja, "to whom should I be making this offering of milk rice?"

"Brahmin, among all the gods and humans, its Māras and Brahmās, this entire population of recluses and brahmins, I do not see even a single being, who by taking this milk rice would be able to consume and digest it, except for The Tathāgata, or one of his true disciples.

“Therefore, brahmin, throw away that milk rice where there is little or no life at all, or cast it into the water where there are no living beings that you could discern.”

And just as directed, the brahmin farmer Bhāradvāja threw the milk rice into the water, where there were no living beings that he could discern. But the moment he cast it in the water, suddenly, it began making bubbles and hissing sounds, as the water began sizzling and sending out smoke.

On witnessing this take place in front of his eyes, suddenly, Bhāradvāja became terrified and awestruck, and he began trembling as his hair stood on end. Recovering from his shock, he returned back to The Blessed One, fell to his knees while placing his head at the feet of Lord Buddha and uttered these words:

“How wonderful! It is just amazingly wonderful! I feel as though Master Gautama has turned upright what was overturned, revealing what was hidden, showing the correct path to someone who was lost, as though one were to bring a lamp into the darkness, for all those with eyesight to see.

“Master Gautama, You have made the Dhamma clear to me in many ways. “Bhante, I go for refuge to Master Gautama, to the Dhamma, and to the Sangha of Bhikkhus. May The Blessed One grant me the Going Forth, by giving me the Higher Ordination in His Dispensation?”

Thus, the brahmin farmer Bhāradvāja received the Going Forth and the Higher Ordination in The Blessed One’s Dispensation. Soon after his Higher Ordination, the Venerable Bhāradvāja, while being alone and secluded from the crowd, living heedfully, with resolution and practicing diligently, before long, he here and now was able to finally realize, by himself, the noble end of the Holy Life; experiencing for himself that unsurpassed knowledge for which sons of good families rightfully leave the household life by becoming homeless.

And the Venerable Bhāradvāja knew for himself, with certainty unparalleled:

‘Now, birth is finally destroyed; the Holy Life is fully lived; what should be done is now done, and there is no more coming to any state of becoming.’

And Venerable Bhāradvāja became one of the Arahants.